

ANIMAL TRACKS IN THE SNOW.

BY BARNEY HOSKIN STANDISH.

THERE are three classes of people who are especially interested in animal tracks in the snow: country boys who go cross lots and through woods to school in winter, woodsmen in general, whether hunters, trappers, or lovers of nature, and artists who paint winter landscapes and country scenes. The tracks here represented are copied from nature, with the animal in sight, and are nearly as typical of their kind as the tracks of man are of mankind. In each case they represent the animal as if going up the page, and in each group of tracks the upper or head ones are made by the hind feet (with a possible exception in No. 4). It is with the hind feet upon the ground in front of the fore feet that the animal makes its spring.

The Rabbit sleeps by day in tufts of grasses and brush-piles. At night it comes forth to browse, ornamenting the snow with its almost unchanging groups of footprints. It never walks, but it hops a few inches and jumps several feet. In its jumps one fore foot is placed directly in front of the other, and the hind feet are thrown outside and ahead of them. The fore feet come up, one at a time, as the hind feet go down; and the animal is thus doubled up for the leap. No. 1 represents the tracks.

The Deer is noted for its long leap and the high rate of speed which it is capable of attaining. Unlike the rabbit or the fox, it has hoofs, and a single footprint is not unlike that of the sheep. Its walking-tracks are represented by No. 3. You will observe that they are but slightly spread. No. 2 represents the tracks of its leaps, and of course the forward ones are made by the hind feet.

The Muskrat is more or less active all winter, for it stores no food, but obtains it under the ice. This consists of aquatic plants and their roots. On warm days you may find its














tracks beside the open streams. It is not a good walker—some woodsmen maintain it never walks when traveling. The tracks of its short, slow jump are shown by No. 4.

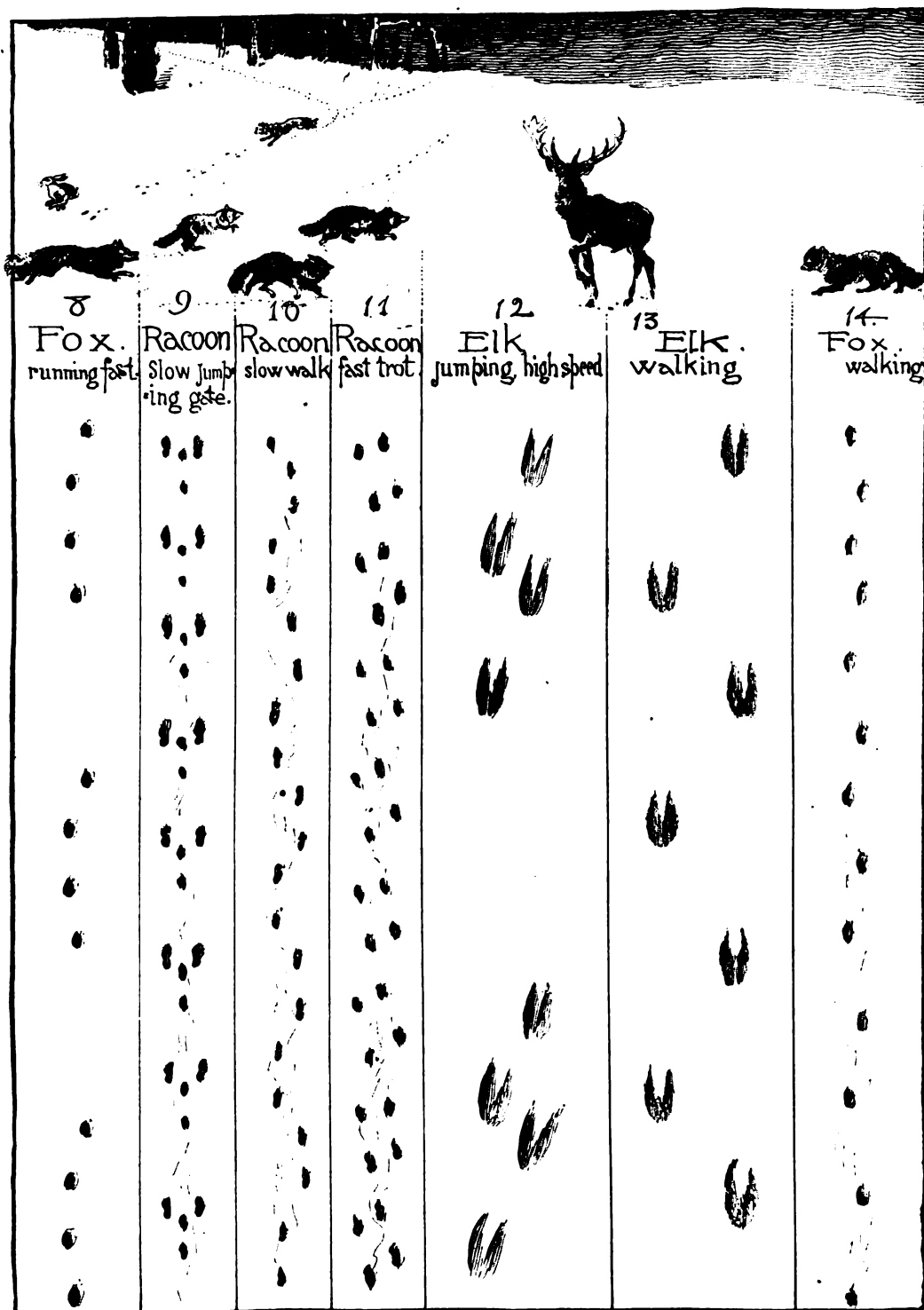
The Skunk during the colder part of winter remains in its den, which is usually a hollow log or an earth burrow. Long before snow disappears, however, you may expect to find its footprints. It sleeps by day and hunts by night. The tracks made when walking are so wide apart that they appear in two rows, as may be seen by looking at No. 5 held level with the eye. This may be because the skunk's legs are short and its body wide. Although this animal has a wabbling canter, it is slow on foot, and seldom attempts to run when in danger. It has a surer means of self-defense. No. 4 shows the tracks of the short, awkward leap.

The Mink makes its nest in the banks of streams, in hollow logs, and among rocks. Its feet are partly webbed, and it is an excellent swimmer, capable of catching fish. This animal seems, however, incapable of walking, and when on land or ice proceeds by a series of jumps, often so long that you would say it was fleeing from danger. For each jump it leaves but two tracks. This, no doubt, is the result of raising its fore feet, one at a time, and sliding its hind feet under them, as the leap is finished. No. 6 represents the tracks that it leaves in the snow. The Weasel and Ermine make similar tracks.

Squirrels during the coldest weather of winter sleep in their nests in hollow trees, and also in those made of leaves in tree-tops. But on warm, sunshiny days they come forth. Therefore it cannot be truly said that they are hibernating animals. Their fore legs are short compared with their hind ones, and the feet on these legs have but four toes, while their hind ones have five. As they pass from tree to tree in the snow they leave their four-cornered groups

Animal Tracks in the Snow

						
1 Rabbit Medium speed Upper tracks hind feet.	2 Deer. Cat, or Dog. High speed.	3 Deer Walking	4 Muskrat or Skunk (slow lope)	5 Skunk or Muskrat walking =	6 Mink. Weasel. Ermine Jumping. 2 tracks for 4 feet. Medium speed	7 Squirrel. Medium rate. 5 toed hind feet always in front. See No 1
						



of tracks; and you may notice that the five-toed feet make the front tracks. They are larger and wider apart than those of the fore feet.

The Fox is noted for its long leaps and great speed, being able to overtake and devour rabbits, and to escape danger itself when pursued. When walking it puts one foot nearly ahead of another, thus leaving what approaches a single line of tracks. These tracks much resemble those of the domestic cat, and many a hunter has followed the latter, thinking himself in pursuit of Reynard. No. 14 represents the tracks made in walking, and No. 8 those in running. Of course, in the latter figure the forward or upper tracks are made by the hind feet, for it is from these feet he is able to spring so far.

The Racoon's favorite home is a hollow tree near a stream or body of water. This animal hibernates in winter, but long before the snow is off it is dotted and figured by its feet. Its tracks are along the river and in the gorge by the brook, where it goes to hunt for clams

snails and water-beetles. In fact, it is hungry enough now to eat a dead fish or the bits of the partridge that the owl has left. Its hind feet are shaped much like the feet of a child, but they have long toes. The tracks of these long, wide-spreading toes will not be likely to be distinct in the snow, but in the mud they show plainly. It is not a fast runner, and its lope is somewhat logy. No. 9 represents the foot-prints of its leap at a low rate of speed; No. 10, a slow hunting-walk; and No. 11, a trot.

The Elk, though much smaller and slimmer than a domestic cow, has feet much like hers. Indeed, they are so large that its walking-tracks (No. 13) might be mistaken for those of the tame animal. The elk, however, is capable of long leaps. I have known one to clear twelve feet when hard pressed. No. 12 are typical tracks, but the elk is more apt than the deer to vary from the type. When jumping a stream or object that requires unusual effort, the elk places its feet as the rabbit does (see No. 1).

THE LITTLE FRENCH POODLE.

BY LAURA CATE.

ONE time I saw a little dog.
 "Oh, little dog," said I,
 "You are the *dearest* little dog!
 Now tell me, can you fly?"

The little dog he said: "Oh, yes!"
 And jumped right o'er the bench.
 Said I: "You clever little dog!"
 (I said it, though, in French.)

The little dog he looked at me,
 And slyly winked his eye.
 I looked at him, and then I laughed;
 "You *funny* dog!" said I.

"You 're just the smartest little dog
 That ever jumped a bench."
 The little dog he looked at me,
 And wagged his tail (in French).